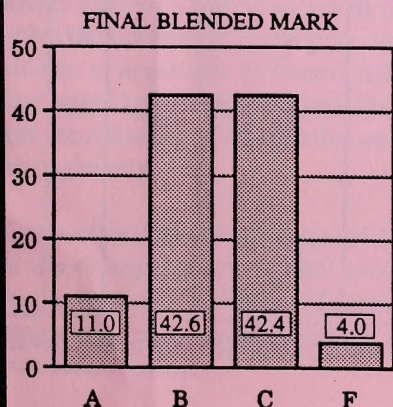
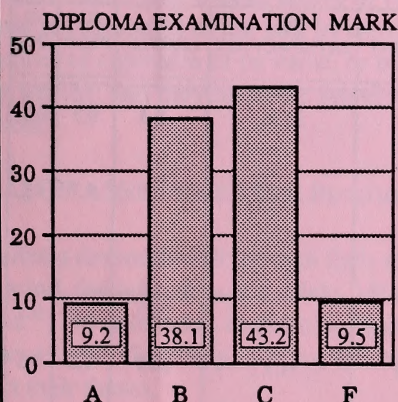
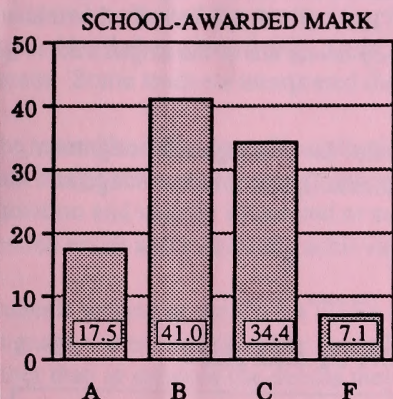


# English 30 Diploma Examination Results

CANADIANA  
OCT - 8 1991



The summary information in this report provides teachers, school administrators, students, and the general public with an overview of results from the June 1991 administration of the English 30 Diploma Examination. The information is most helpful when used in conjunction with the detailed school and jurisdiction reports that have been mailed to schools and school jurisdiction offices. An annual provincial report containing a detailed analysis of the combined January, June, and August results will be available in the fall of 1991.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE EXAMINATION

The English 30 Diploma Examination consists of two parts: a written-response section and a multiple-choice section. Each part is worth 50% of the total examination mark.

## ACHIEVEMENT OF STANDARDS

The information reported is based on the final blended marks achieved by 13 854 students who wrote the June 1991 examination.

- 96.0% of these students achieved the acceptable standard (a final blended mark of 50% or higher).
- 11.0% of these students achieved the standard of excellence (a final blended mark of 80% or higher).

The competence of students achieving the standard of excellence in English 30 was impressive. However, skills demonstrated at the satisfactory level tended to be uneven; students showed ability on occasion to use language well but this was not always sustained.

## PROVINCIAL AVERAGES

- The average school-awarded mark was 66.7%.
- The average diploma examination mark was 64.0%.
- The average final blended mark, representing an equal weighting of the diploma examination and school-awarded marks, was 65.8%.



## PART A: WRITTEN RESPONSE

Part A: Written Response is written at a different time from Part B: Reading (Multiple Choice). Students are required to complete two writing assignments related to the same piece of literature. Both assignments assess a variety of writing and thinking skills.

Readers will find the results most meaningful in the context of the assignments and the scoring descriptors. The most useful starting place for reviewing these results is at the (3) SATISFACTORY level. Such work exceeds the pass mark of 50%. The scoring guides that describe proficiency levels are in the *English 30 Diploma Examination Update for 1992*, which is available in all schools.

The table below outlines the requirements for each assignment, the categories for scoring each assignment, the amount each category contributes to the total mark (Parts A and B combined), and the percentage of students achieving at the various levels.

### EXAMINATION BLUEPRINT and PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESULTS

DESCRIPTION OF THE WRITING ASSIGNMENT	SCORING CATEGORY	PROPORTION OF TOTAL MARK (%)	PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF SCORES					
			(5) EXCELLENT	(4) PROFICIENT	(3) SATISFACTORY	(2) LIMITED	(1) POOR	(0) INS
<b>Minor Assignment</b> The student is required to write a personal response to the reading selection provided in the examination.	1. Thought and Detail	7.5	3.4	31.8	55.5	8.3	0.7	0.3
	2. Writing Skills	7.5	3.0	31.0	56.0	9.0	0.7	0.3
<b>Major Assignment</b> The major assignment maintains a thematic connection to the minor assignment. The student is required to demonstrate an appreciation of literary works studied through a discussion of theme and the literary techniques that support that theme. The student is also required to synthesize thoughts clearly and correctly in writing.	1. Total Impression	5.0	2.3	19.1	58.0	19.3	1.0	0.3
	2. Thought and Detail	12.5	2.3	19.9	51.1	24.7	1.6	0.3
	3. Organization	7.5	2.5	22.0	61.2	13.5	0.6	0.3
	4. Matters of Choice	5.0	3.0	24.4	59.7	11.8	0.9	0.3
	5. Matters of Convention	5.0	4.3	30.0	51.8	12.4	1.2	0.3

Note: The shaded portion represents the percentage of students who achieved or exceeded a SATISFACTORY level of performance.



## EXAMINERS' COMMENTS

### MINOR ASSIGNMENT: Personal Response to Literature

The examination selection, the poem "The Song of Wandering Aengus," describes the power of imagination to inspire, motivate, and provide purpose in our lives.

Students interpreted the poem either literally, i.e., that the speaker has lost his love but will go on seeking her until she is found once again, or metaphorically, i.e., as an expression of an ideal, a fantasy, or a dream. Some students interpreted the poem both literally and metaphorically.

The topic (the influence of imagination) seems to have stimulated students to be conscientious rather than imaginative. Students achieving overall scores of (3) SATISFACTORY chose an appropriate quotation and usually illustrated or supported the quotation with an explanation involving imagining a desired result and eventually achieving it, or they discussed the importance of being imaginative.

Students writing at the (3) SATISFACTORY level demonstrated that they have the conventions of language under control. They tended to use language in a correct, practical way to "get the job done" rather than to enhance the details they are communicating.

Students achieving overall scores of (4) PROFICIENT and (5) EXCELLENT usually went beyond the basic requirements of the task by moving, for instance, from imagination as a positive attribute to a number of examples of its value, or by using a quotation as a "springboard," rather than as the focus of the writing, and moving to the broader and more varied contribution of imagination to society as a whole.

### MAJOR ASSIGNMENT: Literature Composition

Students demonstrated through their responses to the major assignment that they interpreted imagination as mind, feelings, thoughts, ideas, ideals, dreams, goals, illusions, fantasies, creativity, and/or inventiveness. They seemed to have no problem selecting an appropriate literary work on which to base their discussions. Generally, writing was more focused because students did not rely on plot details to support their theses.

Students achieving overall scores of (3) SATISFACTORY frequently presented a reasonable controlling idea but did not always develop it completely. They identified characters who have been influenced positively or negatively by dream, illusion, fantasy, etc., but they often neglected to explore what the author might be saying about imagination and its significance. These students often implicitly acknowledged the necessity of imagination and then described characters whose excess of imagination affected them negatively.

Students achieving overall scores of (4) PROFICIENT and (5) EXCELLENT showed confidence in their use of language and in their ability to interpret the literature insightfully. These students were able to formulate theses that moved beyond the conventional notion of imagination as having positive or negative influence to more insightful interpretations; for example, using imagination to cope with an unacceptable reality.



## PART B: READING (MULTIPLE CHOICE)

### RESULTS

Results are in average raw scores.

Total Part B: 45.5 out of 70

Subtest Results:\*

• Course Content

- Meanings: 17.1 out of 27
- Critical Response: 17.5 out of 26
- Human Experience and Values: 10.9 out of 17

\* Readers are cautioned not to compare subtest results because the subtests are not of equal difficulty. Readers should compare these provincial subtest results with their own school results.

EXAMINATION BLUEPRINT				
Part B: Reading (Multiple Choice) has a value of 70 marks, one mark for each multiple-choice question. Each question is classified in two ways: according to the curricular content area being tested and according to the thinking (process) skill demanded by the question. The examination blueprint illustrates the distribution of questions in June 1991 according to these classifications.				
Question Type by Course Content	Question Type by Thinking Skills			Examination Emphasis (%)
	Literal Understanding	Inference and Application	Evaluation	
Meanings	6, 11, 18, 20, 29, 66	2, 4, 12, 13, 17, 22, 25, 27, 30, 31, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 53, 63, 67	10, 14, 26, 34	28 items (20%)
Critical Response	64	3, 5, 7, 8, 15, 19, 23, 33, 36, 40, 48, 50, 55, 57, 62, 65	1, 16, 24, 28, 32, 42, 49, 61	25 items (18%)
Human Experience and Values		21, 35, 38, 39, 51, 52, 56, 59, 60, 70	9, 37, 41, 54, 58, 68, 69	17 items (12%)
Examination Emphasis (%)	7 items (5%)	44 items (31%)	19 items (14%)	70 items (50%)

The following table shows question-by-question results and the keyed answers. A parallel table in the school and jurisdiction reports shows the percentage of students who selected each alternative. From this table, teachers can determine areas of strength and weakness in the achievement of their students relative to the province as a whole and, consequently, areas of strength and weakness in their own programs.

QUES.	KEY	DIFF.*	QUES.	KEY	DIFF.	QUES.	KEY	DIFF.	QUES.	KEY	DIFF.	QUES.	KEY	DIFF.
1	A	68.8	15	D	76.7	29	C	55.0	43	A	61.8	57	C	73.1
2	A	48.1	16	A	76.9	30	C	81.8	44	C	38.2	58	D	39.1
3	B	61.2	17	B	30.2	31	B	85.1	45	D	73.5	59	B	42.1
4	D	53.5	18	B	82.7	32	C	84.2	46	C	55.0	60	B	63.1
5	A	78.5	19	B	57.2	33	B	85.7	47	D	68.2	61	D	81.1
6	C	85.2	20	D	50.9	34	C	64.1	48	A	45.2	62	A	62.1
7	D	47.1	21	B	58.6	35	C	73.1	49	A	71.6	63	C	37.1
8	C	60.9	22	D	70.9	36	D	72.9	50	B	49.3	64	A	69.1
9	B	60.9	23	A	77.1	37	B	67.3	51	C	77.1	65	C	43.1
10	D	82.9	24	C	57.7	38	A	86.2	52	D	74.5	66	D	74.1
11	B	79.0	25	D	78.0	39	C	74.8	53	A	28.3	67	A	55.1
12	D	73.7	26	C	51.8	40	A	51.8	54	B	64.3	68	C	46.1
13	B	72.1	27	D	77.8	41	D	89.3	55	C	60.2	69	D	58.1
14	A	79.0	28	B	84.7	42	B	66.9	56	B	51.8	70	B	59.1

\*Difficulty – percentage of students answering the question correctly



## EXAMINERS' COMMENTS

During the marking session, a committee of English 30 classroom teachers reviewed the June 1991 English 30 Part B: Reading (Multiple Choice) examination to determine whether the standards embedded in the readings and the questions were appropriate and fair. The committee members concurred that the June 1991 examination set a reasonable but very high standard of achievement for graduating English 30 students. Committee members also stated that the examination would clearly distinguish between high-achieving and low-achieving students.

Student performance on the Part B section in some cases far exceeded the committee's expectations. For example, the committee felt that Selection II, the excerpt from *Two Sides to a Tortoise*, is the most challenging passage ever to appear on an English 30 examination and would be too difficult for many students. Perhaps students recognized immediately that the passage and accompanying questions could require two and possibly three readings. Perhaps its position as the second reading meant that students were still fresh and sharp and conscientious when answering the questions. Whatever the case, the mean score for this set of 12 questions is 67.3%, indicating that many students are capable of effective reading and of understanding difficult material.

The following table gives results for three of the questions concerning the excerpt from *Songs My Mother Taught Me*, considered by the teacher committee to be very accessible to and appropriate for graduating English 30 students. For each question, three statistical references are given: the percentage of all students writing the examination who chose the correct answer, the percentage of students achieving the **standard of excellence** (80% or higher, or A, on the whole examination) who chose the correct answer, the percentage of students achieving the **acceptable standard** (but not receiving marks higher than 64%, or C, on the whole examination) who chose the correct answer. The comments following the table discuss some of the decisions that students may have made and some of the skills that they may have used to answer correctly.

**Percentage of Students Correctly Answering  
Selected Multiple-Choice Questions**

Student Group	Question Number		
	53	56	59
All students	28.3	51.8	42.7
Students achieving the <b>standard of excellence</b> (80% or higher, or A) on the whole examination	69.3	89.4	60.2
Students achieving the <b>acceptable standard</b> who received marks between 50% and 64%, or C, on the whole examination	15.4	37.0	37.1



## EXAMINERS' COMMENTS (continued)

### Questions

53. The word "pretense" (line 54) means

- \*A. deceptive pose
- B. foolish attempt
- C. unworthy ambition
- D. inevitable failure

56. The mother's "golden girl" concept of Isobel (line 70) and Isobel's vision of herself as "Rapunzel-like" (line 95) suggest that mother and daughter are

- A. artistic
- \*B. romantic
- C. cultured
- D. reflective

59. The concept presented in the phrase "locked in the silence of their own unhappiness" (line 129) serves to contrast with

- A. "In many ways my upbringing had been...sheltered" (lines 107-108)
- \*B. "the first truly independent act of my life" (line 117)
- C. "What did I expect to see reflected there?" (lines 121-122)
- D. "They could stop me if they wanted to" (line 127)

### Comments

Questions 53, 56, and 59 are from a set of 11 questions based on excerpt from *Songs My Mother Taught Me* by Audrey Thomas.

Question 53 was assessed as a very easy vocabulary question by the examination review committee. However, only 28.3% of all students answered it correctly. The question may have seemed deceptively straightforward to less careful readers who may have interpreted the question as evaluating the speaker's behavior rather than as identifying the closest meaning of the word "pretense." Of the students who achieved the standard of excellence on the whole examination (Parts A and B combined), 69.3% answered correctly. Of those who achieved marks between 50% and 64% (a letter grade of C) on the whole examination, only 15.4% chose the correct alternative. In this same group (those students achieving marks between 50% and 64%), 45.6% chose alternative B, and 23.2% chose alternative D. Did these students see Isobel, the speaker, as a failure rather than as a young person making her way through a difficult time in her life?

Question 56 achieved the highest correlation (for Part B) between student success on a single question and student success on the examination as a whole. The question required students to appreciate not only the mother's view of the daughter but also the mother's own character as subtly presented by her daughter. The question also assumes that students understand the images of "golden girl" and "Rapunzel" as romantic ideals. Successful students would recognize the appropriateness of alternative B in the sense that "romantic" means imaginative but impractical. The question was answered correctly by 51.8% of all students. Of the students who achieved the standard of excellence on the whole examination (Parts A and B combined), 89.4% chose the correct alternative. Of those who achieved marks between 50% and 64% (a letter grade of C) on the whole examination, 37.0% chose the correct alternative. Alternative D was chosen by 31% of all students, perhaps because they mistakenly connected "reflective" with the word "vision" in the stem of the question.

Question 59 proved to be very difficult, with only 42.7% of all students choosing B, the correct answer. The question requires students extract a concept from a metaphorical phrase and identify a contrasting concept from among the alternatives. The entire excerpt examines the difficulty experienced by a young woman as she recognizes the need to let go of childhood expectations and begin to take responsibility for herself. As she makes the decision to work at the state hospital, she is consciously leaving the security but oppressive circle of her family. Of the students who achieved the standard of excellence on the whole examination (Parts A and B combined), 60.2% answered correctly. Of those who achieved marks between 50% and 64% (a letter grade of C) on the whole examination, 37.1% answered correctly. Successful students would have recognized that the contrast referred to in the question represents the central tension of the story.





